



Comments in support of Michigan Hate Crime Act

Prepared by Fair Michigan President Alanna Maguire of Plymouth, MI on May 12, 2023.

Summary of Fair Michigan Justice Project

The Fair Michigan Justice Project is a unique and historic initiative - a collaboration established in 2016 between the Fair Michigan Foundation and the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office. Fair Michigan provides a Special Investigator, a Victim's Advocate, and a Special Prosecutor to investigate and prosecute capital offenses committed against members of the LGBTQ community. These cases involve bias crimes against the LGBTQ community where victims have been murdered, sexually assaulted, beaten, robbed, or extorted, among other offenses. This project is not just the first of its kind in the state of Michigan; it is the first of its kind in the United States. The project seeks to bridge the gap between the LGBTQ community and law enforcement by encouraging reporting and creating a safe space to do so. We build trust by using dedicated resources and conducting vertical prosecution, and by training local law enforcement in cultural competency in dealing with LGBTQ victims and witnesses. Our former Special Prosecutor even authored a transgender interaction policy that was adopted by the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office in 2016. This policy was later adopted in Ingham, Oakland, and Washtenaw.

Increase in Bias Crimes and the Need for Hate Crimes Legislation

According to the FBI, nationwide statistics for bias crimes are on the rise, and are at their highest levels since 2008 (a 12-year high). These findings are from 2020 and were released in 2021. The FBI relies on voluntary reporting from law enforcement agencies across the country. Since reporting is done voluntarily, these statistics likely undercount the true number of bias crimes, making this trend more serious. Trends in Michigan and the City Detroit further demonstrate the need for strong hate crimes legislature to combat the rise in such crimes. At Fair Michigan, we are especially focused on the alarming statistics for LGBTQ bias crimes which account for the second greatest number of bias crimes committed – second only to those where an individual is targeted based on their race/ethnicity/ancestry. In many of our cases, our victims fall into more than one marginalized community (examples would include African American gay males or Latina transwomen).

When a person is specifically targeted because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability status, the aggressor does not merely victimize that one individual; an entire community is harmed. The state of Michigan must send a clear and strong message that hate is not welcome here; we will not tolerate this kind of criminal activity, and we will prosecute offenders to the fullest extent of the law. Hate crimes legislation can serve as a deterrent to bias crime activity. Fair Michigan encourages the passage of the "Michigan Hate Crime Act", and we look forward to having new laws to prosecute those who target our fellow Michiganders based on who they are or how they identify.

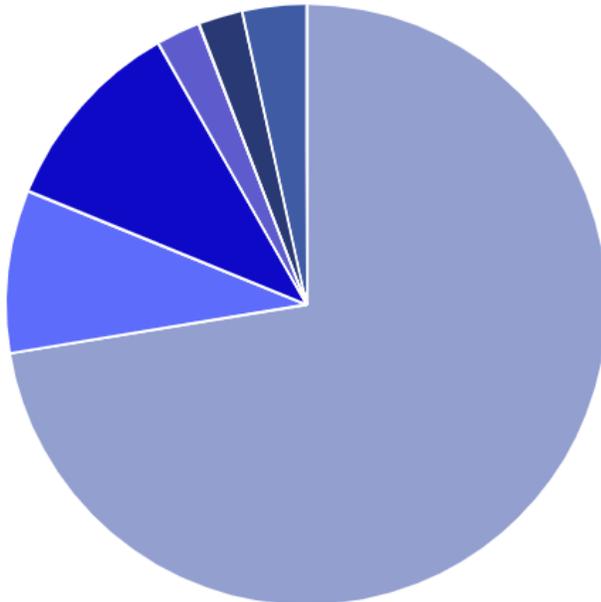
FBI Bias Crime Data Summaries

National Statistics (2020)



Aggregated data from 628 law enforcement agencies in Michigan, as reported to the FBI (2020)

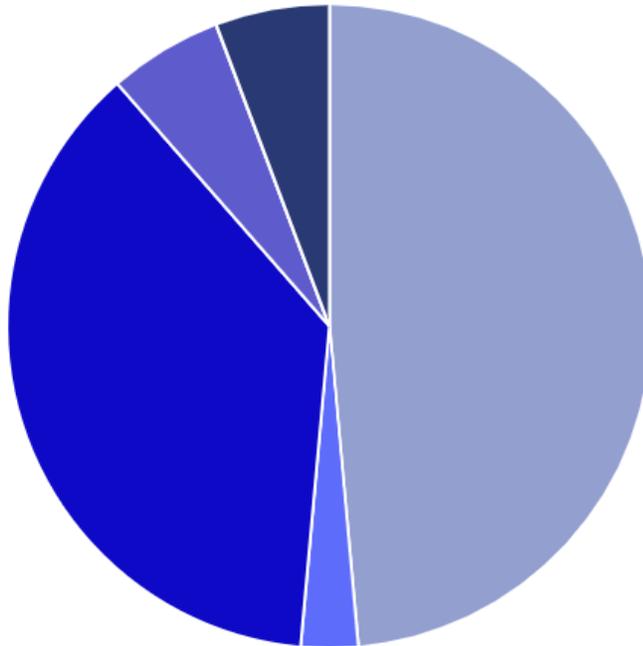
■ Race/Ethnicity/Ancestry: 273
 ■ Religion: 33
 ■ Sexual Orientation: 40
 ■ Disability: 9
 ■ Gender: 9
■ Gender Identity: 13
 ■ Multiple Bias: 0
 Total: 377



- We see that bias crimes involving a victim’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity account for the second largest number of bias crimes committed in Michigan- second only to individuals who were targeted for their race/ethnicity/ancestry.

Data from Detroit Police Department, as reported to the FBI (2020)

■ Race/Ethnicity/Ancestry: 17
 ■ Religion: 1
 ■ Sexual Orientation: 13
 ■ Disability: 2
 ■ Gender: 2
■ Gender Identity: 0
 ■ Multiple Bias: 0
 Total: 35



- We see a similar trend in reported statistics from the City of Detroit Police Department. LGBTQ bias crimes account for the second largest number of bias crimes committed in the City of Detroit – second only to those targeted for their race/ethnicity/ancestry.

*Source for all data: Federal Bureau of Investigation Crime Data Explorer

<https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov/pages/explorer/crime/hate-crime>